

back to the U.S. in the form of imports—for example, component parts shipped to Mexico for assembly into finished goods and infrastructure equipment for use in the building of factories.

And then there's the small matter of the wages of American workers. In Nafta's first year, before the collapse of the peso, America's 77 million production workers endured a 3 percent drop in their real hourly wages—the steepest one-year decline ever recorded.

That, of course, was directly related to the overall expansion of the labor pool under Nafta, and the fact that the number of companies choosing to relocate to Mexico has, as expected, accelerated. The chilling effect of these developments on wage demands should be obvious.

The peso devaluation has dried up the consumer market in Mexico. That simply means that as bad as Nafta was originally, Mexicans are now even less able to buy American goods.

But it was Nafta that put us on this highway to nowhere in the first place. The collapse of the peso just increased the speed.●

SUPPORT OF THE LOW-INCOME HOUSING CREDIT

● Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my great dismay at a proposal passed this week by the House Ways and Means Committee to repeal the low-income housing tax credit.

The housing credit is the Federal Government's principal and most successful affordable housing program. The Enterprise Foundation estimates that the housing credit is responsible for almost all of the new private construction of housing units for lower income renters, and that almost 800,000 units of rental housing for lower income working families and the elderly have been constructed or rehabilitated as a result of the housing credit. They also report that the 106,000 affordable housing units generated with the housing credit in 1993 resulted in the creation of approximately 90,000 jobs, \$2.8 billion in wages, and \$1.3 billion in additional tax revenues.

I have visited many of the projects in New York that have been made possible by the housing credit, and I can assure you the credit is having a dramatic effect on the availability of good, affordable housing. Yet now some of our colleagues in the House would repeal it. I do not understand what their reasoning is.

The House Ways and Means Committee proposal would sunset the credit at the end of 1997. The committee acted without holding any hearings to review the housing credit. And while the committee calls on the Government Accounting Office to review the management and operation of the housing credit, it acts nonetheless.

The housing credit was devised by the Senate Finance Committee during consideration of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, and was signed into law by President Reagan. It has enjoyed solid bipartisan support for nearly a decade.

I was pleased in 1993, as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, to bring legislation before the Senate which permanently extended the hous-

ing credit. That legislation was enacted as the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. We were able to permanently extend the housing credit in a bill which produced the largest amount of deficit reduction in this country's history. The Office of Management and Budget estimates that the direct and indirect effects of the bill were to reduce the baseline deficit by a cumulative amount of one trillion dollars. In sum, while making a very significant attack on the deficit, we were still able to find the resources for this important national priority. And yet just 2 years later we see an effort to repeal it. This is an odd development, indeed, and I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing it.●

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Friday the Senate proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 1817, the military construction appropriations bill, and it be considered under the following time agreement: 20 minutes equally divided between Senators BURNS and REID, or their designee; 10 minutes under the control of Senator BINGAMAN; and, 20 minutes under the control of Senator MCCAIN.

I further ask that, following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to a vote on the adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate considers the conference report to accompany H.R. 1854, the legislative appropriations bill, that it be considered under the following time agreement: 30 minutes to be equally divided between Senators MACK and MURRAY; and 10 minutes under the control of Senator SIMON.

I further ask that, following the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the adoption of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, immediately following the disposition of the military construction appropriations conference report on Friday, the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 188, S. 1244, the District of Columbia appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MERCURY-CONTAINING BATTERY MANAGEMENT

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 1882, S. 619.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 619) to phase out the use of mercury in batteries and provide for the efficient and cost-effective collection and recycling or proper disposal of used nickel cadmium batteries, small sealed lead-acid batteries, and certain other batteries, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

S. 619

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) it is in the public interest to—

(A) phase out the use of mercury in batteries and provide for the efficient and cost-effective collection and recycling or proper disposal of used nickel cadmium batteries, small sealed lead-acid batteries, and other regulated batteries; and

(B) educate the public concerning the collection, recycling, and proper disposal of such batteries;

(2) uniform national labeling requirements for regulated batteries, rechargeable consumer products, and product packaging will significantly benefit programs for regulated battery collection and recycling or proper disposal; and

(3) it is in the public interest to encourage persons who use rechargeable batteries to participate in collection for recycling of used nickel-cadmium, small sealed lead-acid, and other regulated batteries.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

[In] For purposes of this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) BUTTON CELL.—The term "button cell" means a button- or coin-shaped battery.

(3) EASILY REMOVABLE.—The term "easily removable", with respect to a battery, means detachable or removable at the end of the life of the battery—

(A) from a consumer product by a consumer with the use of common household tools; or

(B) by a retailer of replacements for a battery used as the principal electrical power source for a vehicle.

(4) MERCURIC-OXIDE BATTERY.—The term "mercuric-oxide battery" means a battery that uses a mercuric-oxide electrode.

(5) RECHARGEABLE BATTERY.—The term "rechargeable battery"—

(A) means 1 or more voltaic or galvanic cells, electrically connected to produce electric energy, that is designed to be recharged for repeated uses; and

(B) includes any type of enclosed device or sealed container consisting of 1 or more such cells, including what is commonly called a battery pack (and in the case of a battery pack, for the purposes of the requirements of easy removability and labeling under section 103, means the battery pack as a whole rather than each component individually); but

(C) does not include—